CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on
Wednesday, 4 September 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Horacio Arteaga (Venezuela)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The 605th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is called to order.

The entire international disarmament community has learned with great sorrow of the loss of one of the most important persons in the field of multilateral negotiations. Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles leaves an indelible memory which goes beyond the borders of his own country and region to attain worldwide scope. In addition to having served as Secretary of External Relations for Mexico, he held many senior posts in his country's Foreign Ministry, and in particular was head of the delegation to this negotiating body between 1967 and 1989. For many years he was the dean of the Ambassadors accredited to this Conference, and participated in the negotiations on the four international instruments concluded in this room, contributing through his vast knowledge as well as his extraordinary skill and diplomatic experience to the success of those negotiations. The text of each of those instruments contains provisions that reflected his concerns and aspirations. While his input at the multilateral level was decisive, his contribution at the regional level with the elaboration of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, on the first nuclear-weapon-free zone declared in an inhabited region, can be regarded as a model of intelligence, tact and tenacity in the service of a Latin American ideal that he never lost sight of, despite his undeniable importance and personal significance in worldwide multilateral negotiations.

Alfonso Garcia Robles, the worthy recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, marks a whole era in multilateral diplomacy in the area of disarmament, an era that would not have been the same without his presence, an era that is deeply indebted to him and with which his name will always remain associated. Even the present configuration of this sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, as may be seen in paragraph 120 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and in our own rules of procedure, owes a great deal to this distinguished and unforgettable figure. The rotating presidency, the establishment of subsidiary bodies and the annual agenda, inter alia, were the result of tireless and effective work.

His contribution to the major problems of international peace and security was not restricted to his work as a distinguished member of the Mexican diplomatic service. He also participated in drafting the San Francisco Charter, he was a brilliant head of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and he was the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for the Middle East. But this unsurpassed international career cannot lead us to forget that Alfonso Garcia Robles combined this with exceptional human qualities which earned him the respect, admiration and friendship of all who had the privilege of knowing him. As a Venezuelan and a Latin American I wish to add that I feel very proud of the work of this distinguished figure. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament and on my own behalf, I would ask the representative of Mexico to convey to his Government, to Mrs. Garcia Robles, who, with her well-known charm and human touch, was at his side during the course of his

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exemplary career, and also to his children, our deepest condolences at a loss which affects us greatly. I now give the floor to the representative of India, Ambassador Shah, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 21.

Mr. SHAH (India): I take the floor on behalf of the Group of 21 to perform a sad duty. It is with great shock and a deep sense of sorrow that I and my colleagues in the Group of 21 have learnt of the passing away of Ambassador Alfonso García Robles of Mexico. Ambassador García Robles had long played such a vital role in the field of multilateral disarmament that his passing away will be a great loss not only to us in G-21 but to the entire international community interested in achieving disarmament.

Ambassador García Robles' career was intimately tied to the multilateral efforts for peace and disarmament and to the work of the United Nations. He contributed to the preparatory work that led to its establishment and vigorously defended, all throughout his life, the principles enshrined in its Charter in every capacity that he held.

Since his appointment in 1967 as head of the Mexican delegation to the then Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament he devoted a major part of his career to disarmament matters. Earlier, he had brought to a fruitful conclusion the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the 1970s, as the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Ambassador García Robles contributed greatly to developmental issues in addition to his work on disarmament matters. From December 1975, he was appointed Mexico's Minister for Foreign Affairs and served in the Cabinet for almost a year. In 1978, Ambassador García Robles was instrumental in the elaboration of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. In 1982, his devotion to the cause of disarmament and his efforts towards that end received the highest recognition when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, together with Alva Myrdal of Sweden.

For more than 20 years Ambassador Alfonso García Robles was the pillar of strength in the work of the Group of first 8 and now 21 non-aligned and neutral States. He came to embody the spirit of our Group. Today, on behalf of the Group of 21 and on my own behalf, we pay our humble but sincere tribute to his memory.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of India for his statement made on behalf of the Group of 21. I now call on the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr. Kenyon, who will do so on behalf of the Western Group.

Mr. KENYON (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, the Western Group has asked me to join you and the rest of the Conference in honouring the memory of Dr. Don Alfonso García Robles, who was a tireless worker for arms control and disarmament, the objectives for which this Conference was founded. Many of us move in and out of this kind of work; some stay in it longer than others; but he gave a great part, particularly the latter part of his lifetime, to seeking progress in this area. It is sad that

(Mr. Kenyon, United Kingdom)

he should pass away at a time when the dam seems to be breaking and we seem to be making more progress in many areas than we have before. I will not enumerate what he did. You did this, and the delegate of India speaking on behalf of the Group of 21 has done that already. I would like to say that my impression of Don Alfonso was that he seemed to combine a dedication and a serenity; I recall that sometimes I would go to him and say, "Given the positions of different delegations, how can you expect us to make any progress on this issue?" And he would smile and say, "One can always hope". And I think hope is a very important thing if one is working in this difficult area. In many ways and in many details we did not share his views as to how to make progress in arms control and disarmament, but we certainly shared his objectives, which were to make this world a safer place for everyone, and I think the best way to honour his memory is probably to redouble our efforts in pursuing those objectives. On behalf of the Western Group, I would join you in asking the delegation of Mexico to pass our condolences to his family.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement on behalf of the Western Group. I now call on the representative of Hungary, Ambassador Tóth, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European and Other States.

Mr. TOTH (Hungary): Let me say a few words on the sad occasion of the death of the distinguished diplomat of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. Alfonso García Robles, on behalf of the delegations of Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. It was only a year and a half ago that representatives at the Conference on Disarmament bade farewell to a colleague leaving the negotiating body who had left an indelible mark in the history book of multilateral disarmament diplomacy. I do not wish to enumerate his services rendered to the cause of disarmament that are well known to the international community. Mr. García Robles was a unique diplomat, not only because he had devoted more than a quarter of a century of his life and professional career to disarmament but also because of the outstanding achievements that bear the mark of his personal contribution. In spite of great professional successes, he had never been complacent but remained persevering in his quest for a more secure and peaceful world. His untiring efforts were acknowledged when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1982. A substantial, productive and successful life like his can only be admired and envied. Allow me, through you, Mr. President, to express to his wife and family, and to the delegation, Government and people of Mexico, the deepest sympathy and sorrow of the delegations of Bulgaria, the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, at the passing away of His Excellency Mr. Alfonso García Robles, whose memory will remain with us in the many years to come.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Hungary for his statement on behalf of the Group of Eastern European and Other States. I now give the floor to the representative of China, Ambassador Hou Zhitong.

Mr. HOU (China) (translated from Chinese): The Chinese delegation learned with deep grief and shock of the death of the former Ambassador of Mexico to the Conference on Disarmament and Nobel Prize laureate, Mr. García Robles. This is a colossal loss to the people of Mexico and a loss to the international community. Here in the name of the Chinese delegation I would like to express my deepest condolences to the Ambassador of Mexico, Ambassador Bosch, and through him to the Mexican people and Government and to Ambassador Robles' family.

Ambassador Robles was a veteran of international disarmament, an international activist of acclaim. He made commendable and significant contributions to the cause of international disarmament and won respect and acclaim worldwide. Furthermore, Ambassador Robles was a founder of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in Latin America, which created the first nuclear-free zone in the world. He made an indelible contribution to the success of the first SSOD and to the formulation of its Final Document. He made firm and unremitting efforts in the restructuring of the multilateral international disarmament forums, including the CD, and the consideration of important disarmament items such as the disarmament decades. Here I would also like to point out that Ambassador Robles was an old friend of the Chinese people. He once paid a visit to China at the invitation of the Chinese Government and worked for the promotion of friendship and cooperation between the peoples of China and Mexico. We will continue to draw inspiration from the his noble qualities, wisdom, diplomatic skills and contributions.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of China for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Ambassador García Moritán, who will speak on behalf of the Latin American member and non-member countries participating in the work of the Conference.

Mr. GARCIA MORITAN (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): The very special feelings that I might have expressed on behalf of the delegations from Latin America which are members of the Conference on Disarmament and those attending as observers have been very well voiced by the coordinator of the Group of 21. However, we thought it appropriate to add a few words about a man who already appears on the pages of the history of diplomacy as a result of the enormous influence of his personality and approach over more than half a century. As Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mexico, as an international civil servant and as a diplomat representing the great nation of Mexico he involved his country and all of Latin America in the struggle for peace, security and development. The untiring efforts of the former dean of the disarmament corps merit broad recognition, as was noted by the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly when Don Alfonso García Robles ended his long professional career in the multilateral field. Suffice it to mention, in that regard, that he was the only diplomat who participated in all the disarmament negotiating forums. He was head of his country's delegation to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, the Committee on Disarmament and the Conference on Disarmament. Furthermore, as was quite rightly pointed out by the Nobel Committee in setting out the reasons for his being awarded the Peace Prize in

(Mr. García Moritán, Argentina)

1982, his outstanding efforts were significant in opening the eyes of the world to the threat facing mankind with the continuing nuclear arms race. At the regional level, his memory will also be indelible. In his long career he was the architect of a pioneering instrument in the establishment of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in a populated area, the Treaty of Tlatelolco. He was also a pioneer of the process of regional integration who through the search for regional security and its global ramifications, perceived the foundations for the harmonious and integrated development of the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean. We Latin Americans, we who have been his friends and colleagues, and who, as in my own case, have been his disciples, will be unable to forget his tremendous human qualities in addition to his professional skills. Perhaps one of the best tributes that we could pay to his memory is to continue to redouble our efforts to promote the goal of common security through disarmament, through observance of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the realization of the purposes for which García Robles fought so hard - summarized in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which also includes, as we all know, what we might refer to as the birth certificate of this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Argentina for his statement on behalf of the Latin American member and non-member countries participating in the work of the Conference. I now invite the Conference to observe a minute's silence in memory of Ambassador D. Alfonso García Robles.

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Thank you very much. I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Marín Bosch.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): President Carlos Salinas de Gortari will lead the posthumous tribute to Ambassador Alfonso García Robles to be paid by the people and Government of Mexico in just a few hours in the Foreign Ministry of my country. But this Council chamber was of very special importance and meaning to Don Alfonso, and consequently we wish to express appreciation for everything that has just been said in this forum. We will convey it to our Government and to Mrs. Juanita García Robles and their children.

The professional life of Ambassador Alfonso García Robles covered a turbulent and contradictory half-century. There were ill-fated years and times of hope. In 1938, when he concluded his post-graduate studies in Paris and The Hague, he was invited to give a series of lectures in Europe on a very controversial topic - the reasons for the nationalization of the Mexican oil industry in 1938. And on the eve of the Second World War, he joined the foreign service. The upheaval was followed by the promise of a better world, and Alfonso García Robles was present at its creation, first at the Latin American level in the Chapultepec conference and subsequently at the San Francisco conference. After a decade as Director of the United Nations Political Division he rejoined our foreign service. He was a delegate

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

to the first conferences on the law of the sea, then Ambassador to Brazil and, as Under-Secretary for Multilateral Affairs, the architect of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

During the complex negotiations on that Treaty there was an episode that demonstrates his tenacity. In the Mexican Foreign Ministry some wished to abandon the negotiations, and at a particularly difficult time it was hinted to him that perhaps the President shared that view. Under-Secretary García Robles asked to see the President and persuaded him not to give up the undertaking. The Treaty was signed in 1967, the year when he came for the first time to this Conference on Disarmament. He was Permanent Representative in New York from 1970 to 1975, when he was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs. From 1977 onwards he devoted himself fully to the work of this Conference. His contribution to disarmament was recognized in 1982 when, together with Ms. Alva Myrdal, he received the Nobel Peace Prize. In addition to the Treaty of Tlatelolco he participated actively in the negotiation of the various multilateral instruments in the ENDC and the CCD and in the restructuring of the latter. He played a decisive role in the elaboration of the Final Document of the first special session devoted to disarmament and was a most enthusiastic promoter of the World Disarmament Campaign and the comprehensive programme of disarmament.

Certainly he was not always the favourite delegate of the big military Powers, but everyone respected him, particularly his colleagues in what was originally the Group of 8 and is now the Group of 21. I had the good fortune to work with Ambassador García Robles from the first day I joined the foreign service, and I was also fortunate enough to be honoured by his friendship. His personal style can be summed up in a phrase he used often: suaviter in modo, fortiter in re. He was a teacher to several generations of Mexican diplomats and a source of reference and advice for many political leaders of my country. His opinions were well-founded and people listened to him. For him diplomacy was never the art of dissimulation. More than anything else he was the faithful interpreter of the principles of our foreign policy, and thus a good friend of the United Nations and an untiring defender of its noble ideals and purposes. He was an internationalist par excellence and served universal causes loyally.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement. We will now move on to outstanding matters that require our attention today. On the list of speakers for today are the representatives of Brazil, Chile, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, who will take the floor as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons to introduce the report of that subsidiary body, and Germany. Before I give him the floor, I would like to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf to our distinguished visitor today, His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Ambassador Marcos Castrioto de Azambuja. Ambassador Azambuja needs no introduction. His outstanding work in this Conference as a representative of his country is well remembered and - perhaps it may be appropriate to mention this - many of his wise comments in this negotiating body are still very much with us in our everyday work. Apart from the fact that we are

(The President)

naturally very happy to have him with us again, I am sure that his statement today will be most useful to us in our future undertakings. I call on His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, Ambassador Marcos Castrioto de Azambuja.

Mr. AZAMBUJA (Brazil): Mr. President, thank you, and thank you for the very kind and very warm words of welcome. I find myself in the difficult, almost impossible, position of not being able to refer personally to each one of those in this room. I am so close to so many of you; it gives me so much joy and pleasure to see you again that I find it impossible to address to each one of you words of friendship and of encouragement. Let me just say that I am delighted to be here, I am happy to be here and that, in a way, this has become an historic session, not because of what I am going to say, but because of what was said about Alfonso García Robles, to whom I will refer at the end of my statement. But I will read the text I have in front of me, thanking, of course, Mr. Martenson, Mr. Komatina, and all the rest of you for being here.

First of all let me congratulate you on your appointment as President of the Conference on Disarmament. It is my privilege to come back to this plenary, to address the Conference and to see you, my dear friend Ambassador Arteaga, of neighbouring Venezuela, presiding over the work of the Conference in this very important period.

I am grateful to you all for allowing me some time to make this statement on behalf of my Government at this very busy last meeting of the 1991 session, which is dedicated primarily to the final approval of the report to the General Assembly. I couldn't, of course, let pass such a precious opportunity of coming back among old and new friends of the CD and presenting a brief up-date of some Brazilian positions and concerns in the field of disarmament and international security. Before doing so, I would like to touch on a point of special pride and satisfaction to my Government and to myself. As you recall, a little more than a year ago, the delegations of Argentina and Brazil started the practice of making joint statements to the plenary sessions of the Conference. The most recent one was the intervention of my good friend Ambassador García Moritán in relation to our bilateral agreement for the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy, signed by Presidents Menem and Collor in Guadalajara in Mexico in July 1991. It is our intention to make joint statements as frequently as possible in the field of disarmament, as we are increasingly doing in other forums, as a testimony of our growing integration and closer identity of views.

I am convinced that the ever deepening understanding between Brazil and Argentina in sensitive areas, such as the nuclear one, will have a positive influence over our region as a whole and to some extent on prevailing attitudes towards cooperation and exchanges in technology, equipment and materials of possible dual use. I need not repeat the expressions of the Ambassador of Argentina in relation to our own nuclear agreement and to the wide-ranging process of integration being carried out between our two countries. May I just stress that our experience in the nuclear field proved that the establishment of appropriate confidence-building mechanisms based on an effective system of cooperation in advanced technologies is a firm path

(Mr. Azambuja, Brazil)

towards enhanced regional security. It is my belief that bilateral and regional understandings of this kind can also be reached in other regions and on a global scale, thus contributing to the cause of a disarmed and secure world.

In the same spirit, I am very pleased to announce that a joint declaration on the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons will be signed tomorrow in Mendoza, Argentina, by the Ministers of External Relations of Argentina, Brazil and Chile. The Government of Uruguay will also adhere to this instrument. This very important declaration will reaffirm our formal engagement not to develop, produce, acquire or use those inhumane means of warfare and will also address the question of exports of chemical substances that can be used as precursors for chemical weapons, pending the conclusion of the chemical weapons convention. This important collective step in the field of regional security and confidence-building constitutes also a very relevant contribution to international efforts to prevent the spread of chemical weapons. It demonstrates the readiness of our countries to make all efforts to avoid the introduction of weapons of mass destruction in the region while at the same time preserving the whole gamut of peaceful uses of science and technology for our economic development and the welfare of our peoples. I am quite sure, incidentally, that Ambassador García Robles would be delighted to hear this announcement were he still in our midst.

As you are aware, Argentina and Brazil presented recently to the UNDC a proposal for the multilateral consideration of criteria related to the transfer of "sensitive" technologies. We are jointly taking the initiative of promoting the discussion of that subject in the next session of the General Assembly. We would be very interested that many more delegations could react to the document presented to the UNDC, as some representatives of industrialized countries already did, such as Ambassador Gérard Errera, of France.

The recent events in our fast-changing world demonstrated that improved mechanisms are needed to prevent threats to international security. In the perspective of countries like Brazil, such mechanisms, stringent as they may be, should not impose additional barriers to technology access, which is essential for our development. In other words, many difficulties are faced because of the lack of predictable, clear and universally applicable rules for the transfer of dual-use technology.

About two years ago, when I was the representative of Brazil to the Conference on Disarmament, I stated that - and I am quoting myself - "verification will undoubtedly be the crucial subject of disarmament negotiations, multilateral or bilateral, from now to the end of this century". I am very glad to see today that many countries seem to share those views. Proposals were presented aiming at the establishment of a verification regime for a nuclear test ban; measures to strengthen the biological weapons Convention may also be examined at the forthcoming review conference of that Convention, to take place over the next weeks in Geneva. Another evidence of the importance of this subject is the careful attention it received in this year's session of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons.

(Mr. Azambuja, Brazil)

With regard to the negotiation of the chemical weapons convention, the delegation of Brazil is instructed to contribute, as effectively as possible, to the achievement of the objective of concluding the draft next year. As to the verification regime of the convention, it is our hope that an efficient mechanism is established so that we avoid the creation of a cumbersome and costly organization. Likewise, it seems convenient to avoid unnecessary interference with the civilian industrial activities in our countries. In this sense, we considered as a positive step the offer made by the industry representatives, when they met in Geneva last June, that they would be prepared to accept inspections any time anywhere. Serious consideration should be given to that offer, for it could enable the adoption of random inspections in civil chemical facilities, thus allowing for a simple and less costly mechanism that could, at the same time, serve the verification purposes of the convention.

I also think that an appropriate regime of inspections on request could contribute to our aim. More transparency could be obtained if all countries would accept the concept of inspections on request to their chemical facilities, without the right to refusal. I could not envisage a more transparent and non-discriminatory regime, which could at the same time reduce the number of routine inspections and the costs of the future organization.

Negotiations are starting, I understand, in connection with the composition and functions of the executive council of the future organization for the prohibition of chemical weapons. It is of utmost interest to my country that an acceptable agreement is reached that allows for balanced representation of regions, political groups and countries, also taking into account the importance of the chemical industry in the overall context.

It seems to me that after a chemical weapons convention is in force with its verification regime in operation, countries applying other controls and restrictions to international transfers of dual-use chemicals and facilities should suspend them. On the other hand, it would enhance the convention regime and promote universal adherence if reservations to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 could be formally withdrawn when the convention comes into force.

We would receive with great appreciation a formal renunciation by all Latin American countries of all weapons of mass destruction. In our region, more precisely in South America, which is recognized to be the least armed region in the world, economic and social problems are an essential part of collective security. That is why we have to tackle poverty-related questions and request international cooperation to improve our economies and ensure the necessary technology transfers.

At this moment, we are negotiating the chemical weapons convention with renewed enthusiasm, thanks to the positive evolution in the positions of the United States of America and the Soviet Union, which permitted the adoption of an unconditional prohibition of chemical weapons in article I of the draft convention. But besides chemical weapons we continued to debate on important items of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. In this connection, I would like to note the new dimension given to the consideration of item 1, Nuclear test ban.

(Mr. Azambuja, Brazil)

The President of Brazil has welcomed the conclusion of the START Treaty between the United States of America and the USSR as a very important step towards nuclear disarmament. In his communications to Presidents Bush and Gorbachev, President Collor recalled that Brazil had renounced non-peaceful uses of atomic energy and he expressed the hope that the bilateral treaty brings new momentum in the process towards ever decreasing thresholds of nuclear arms, bearing in mind the long-term objective of complete nuclear disarmament and the ban on all types of weapons of mass destruction.

Countries not possessing weapons of mass destruction and having declared the intention of not developing such weapon systems have the right to receive, at the very least, assurances that those will never be used against them. We hope all weapons of mass destruction can be destroyed in the not very distant future and that the countries having such capability renounce once and for all resorting to the improvement of their weapons and to the development of new and more sophisticated ones.

Recent events in the world are proving the need for enhanced collective security measures. Important proposals in this area were put forward after the recent Gulf crisis. Brazil is giving attentive consideration to all proposals that may lead to global disarmament. We all know that whenever multilateral disarmament negotiations are involved renewed efforts will be required on the part of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that this Conference will not frustrate the expectations regarding the role it has to play in this disarmament effort. For my part, I can assure you that Brazil will be committed to new universal and non-discriminatory disarmament understandings to which negotiations of this Conference may lead.

In my final words I would like to pay tribute to an old friend, Ambassador García Robles, from whom I learned so much. I very much regret his death and I am sure that all of us will miss him in the Conference on Disarmament. I will never forget the outstanding performance of this brilliant Ambassador of Mexico, since those distant days when he was the leader of the Mexican delegation and I a junior member of the delegation of Brazil to the negotiations which resulted in the Treaty of Tlatelolco. I am honoured to occupy now his place at the United Nations Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters. Ambassador García Robles was a model for all diplomats working in the field of international security and disarmament. I hope Ambassador Marín Bosch will convey to Mrs. Juanita García Robles and to the boys my deeply felt sentiments.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank His Excellency the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil for his important statement and the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Chile, Mr. González.

Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) (translated from Spanish): My delegation is particularly pleased to address the plenary of the Conference on Disarmament at a time when its work is being presided over by a distinguished and

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experienced Ambassador of Venezuela, a country with which we have historical ties of friendship that have been forged from the dawn of Latin American independence.

Today, the Conference on Disarmament is concluding its 1991 session. We think that this is an appropriate time to assess the work done during these last few months, particularly from our standpoint as a non-member of the Conference. It is therefore our intention to highlight the positive and negative aspects thereof, constantly guided by a genuine constructive spirit.

First of all we must note the renewed impetus of the negotiations for the conclusion of a convention banning chemical weapons once and for all, to the extent that it is no longer illusory to think that the work on this matter can be finalized during the course of next year. The extension of the negotiating mandate, the progress made on vital articles such as articles I and II and the intensive discussions on verification and challenge inspection are tangible examples of this. This is solely the result of the flexibility shown by the delegations of the United States and the Soviet Union in withdrawing their proposals on maintaining a percentage of their stockpiles and on the right to retaliate. We are therefore witnessing a clear case where bilateral initiatives, far from replacing multilateralism, strengthen it in a constructive fashion, so that the Conference on Disarmament, the sole negotiating body in the United Nations system, can attain its important goals.

Chile, like the entire international community, is convinced of the imperative need to conclude as soon as possible an agreement banning the manufacture, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons. In previous statements and in its response to the outline for the exchange of basic data proposed by Germany, it has clearly reiterated that it does not produce nor does it intend to produce this type of weapon, as I wish to reaffirm on this occasion. In that respect, and in order to show the determination guiding us in these areas, I am pleased to announce in this Conference that my country has initiated domestic legislative procedures for the withdrawal of the reservations entered by Chile when it ratified the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

The step that we have taken in this field is, as we see it, a sign of our faith in the results achieved in the negotiations to which I have referred, and also a measure aimed at increasing international and regional trust. We are encouraged to note that several States that had entered similar reservations are prepared to adopt similar measures and we appeal to those that have not yet done so to do likewise so that at the signing of the convention on chemical weapons there will be no reservations to the Geneva Protocol. It is also a particular pleasure for my Government to announce that, as the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil has already said, tomorrow, 5 September, in the city of Mendoza, together with Argentina and Brazil, a joint declaration will be signed on the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, which is clear evidence of the political will which spurs our countries on in our efforts to create real conditions for peace and international stability. At the same time, we particularly welcome the fact that the Government of Uruguay will be joining in that commitment and

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we hope that many other countries will do the same. In this respect the Mendoza agreement, in addition to reaffirming the various unilateral declarations on the non-possession of chemical weapons, refers to the decision to cooperate closely to expedite the conclusion of the convention and to sign it simultaneously as original parties, as well as the intention to institute appropriate measures to monitor substances defined as precursors of chemical warfare agents and the study of mechanisms necessary to ensure compliance with the commitment entered into, until such time as the future convention comes into force. In a similar area, readiness is expressed to look into systems that would help to strengthen the verification machinery under the convention on the prohibition of biological and toxin weapons. Finally, the hope is expressed that other States of the region will endorse the content of this declaration.

It is clear that in various bodies and forums, Latin America is taking major, effective steps forward as regards disarmament problems, arms control and the creation of a climate of mutual trust as expressed in agreements such as the Mendoza agreement, which contribute indirectly but in a meaningful way to strengthening true security based on the elimination of conflict scenarios and their replacement by the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region. In this connection, Chile attaches great importance to regional confidence-building measures, and in this respect has noted with interest the initiative launched by the President of Peru for the holding in Lima next November of a meeting of the foreign ministers of the member countries of the Rio Group aimed at beginning studies and exchanges of views for the purpose of reaching agreement on limiting conventional military arsenals involving high-technology weapons, as well as other matters deemed to be of interest.

As this Conference prepares to adopt a new report to be submitted to the General Assembly containing a summary of the debates and progress made in its subsidiary bodies during this period, allow me to refer to the statement made in this very room on 8 February 1990 by the then representative of Brazil, who, happily, is with us today, Ambassador Marcos Castrioto de Azambuja, who is now Secretary-General in the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With great vision he said:

> "Unless we effectively broaden our working agenda, this Conference could shrink to no more than a de facto preparatory committee for the future convention on chemical weapons, and only later seek new missions to accomplish. This is a minimalist approach and one that falls far short of the expectations of the international community, one that would make a mockery of our many declarations and resolutions and one fraught with the danger of the long agony of a progressively more enfeebled negotiating body."

He went on to add that "the time has come for aggressively creative new thinking, and ... we have 'in-house' the ability and the experience to suggest ways and means for our renewal and for enduring perhaps even greater usefulness in a dramatically altered international political environment."

(Mr. González, Chile)

These words, uttered at the beginning of the 1990 session, are equally relevant as this session ends, and we consider that they can offer food for lengthy reflection by the delegations present here with next year's session in mind. In fact if we analyse the results achieved by the ad hoc committees in the past few months, we can easily reach the conclusion that apart from matters relating to chemical weapons, the remaining topics on the agenda, despite the efforts of many of their chairmen, were considered superficially and therefore progress has not been substantial, as this mandate of a negotiating body entitled us to expect. This is simply the logical outcome of the existence of working groups that do not have the essential negotiating mandate and therefore have to confine themselves to compiling statements and a variety of background material.

My delegation is very much aware of the need to give priority to work on chemical weapons and supports that decision, but it cannot go along with the idea of postponing all the other items in such a way as to convert this Conference into a preparatory conference for the chemical weapons convention. That is why we recognize the great value of the initiative recently submitted by Sweden in document CD/1089, containing a revised version of its own draft treaty on a comprehensive nuclear test ban, which had been submitted in 1983. We believe that that initiative is a useful and timely contribution which has come at a time when the Committee in question, like several others, is stagnating because of a lack of political will to deal with substantive matters. We would therefore venture to propose that among the measures studied annually by the Conference for improving its functioning, we should include next year the permanent establishment of the ad hoc committees with clear-cut and well-defined mandates, so that it is not necessary to devote long weeks each year to discussing how they should be re-established.

With respect to the question of participation by observers, this year the Conference decided as a measure aimed at bringing about improvement that interested countries would not have to indicate which subsidiary bodies they wished to attend and that their seating in this room would rotate. Without going into the pros and cons of these decisions, which we consider merely procedural, I only wish to point out that these measures were agreed without consulting the countries directly involved, that is, the observers. It is an established custom in this Conference that thorough consultations are held before any decision is adopted. However, in this instance which affects non-member States, no one took the initiative of consulting them. In our case, had we been consulted, we would have indicated that if the aim is to facilitate participation by observers, the matter should be studied in a broader fashion, including matters such as requests for participation not having to be renewed annually, and observer countries also being able to be present during informal meetings of the plenary.

The foregoing leads me to wonder whether, in the current period on the international stage, which has witnessed the collapse not just of walls but of the most solidly built authoritarian systems, accompanied by the renewal of the democratic spirit and a willingness for dialogue, this Conference is adjusting to the new times by acting in a transparent fashion. Unfortunately our response to this basic concern is negative, as despite many fervent

(Mr. González, Chile)

statements in this room we have not really seen any substantive changes, and everything continues as if the world remained divided into two irreconcilable blocs. If some delegations suspect exaggeration, then what is the explanation for the fact that after more than six years the Conference has still not been able to resolve the question of its expansion? How can one understand that, at a time when the political scenario has changed radically and the problems which arose in the past have been overcome, it is now that claims are made that dealing with this topic could lead to the dangerous politicization of the Conference? Could expansion by four, five or six new members really endanger the successful conclusion of the chemical weapons convention, or would it on the contrary help to reflect greater universality in respect of the rest of the international community on a matter which is naturally of universal scope? It is not our intention to repeat now the decisive arguments put forward in this room by the distinguished Ambassador of Spain just a few months ago on this same point, but I do wish to say that as an observer country and candidate for membership of the Conference, we fully share his concerns and hope that the period of recess that is now beginning will serve as an incentive for all the parties to deal decisively with this matter which has been with us for such a long time.

I would not wish to conclude these words without expressing my gratitude once again to the distinguished representative of Sweden, Ambassador Hyltenius, for the interest and understanding that he showed in submitting a specific proposal, which in our opinion constitutes a basis for negotiation, gratitude which is also due to all the other ambassadors who have presided over the Conference during the course of this year and thus held informal consultations on the same point. We think that because of its importance and sensitiveness, the study of the matter of expansion next year should be separated from that of improving the effectiveness of the Conference, so that one or if possible a group of coordinators could deal with it in a firm and decisive manner. We will also raise this matter in our statement within the framework of the First Committee of the General Assembly. We also wish to thank the many delegations that actively supported us in the Group of 21 in order that interested observer delegations should be able to participate with the same status in its expanded discussions. Unfortunately the consensus rule enabled the small number of delegations that objected to this step to block its introduction, but we trust that the pause for thought that they themselves sought will lead to an early and successful conclusion for the purpose of showing that the non-aligned countries are able and prepared to initiate the transparency and democracy so sorely needed in this Conference.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Chile for his statement and his kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Ambassador Batsanov, who in his capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons will introduce the report of that subsidiary body, contained in document CD/1108.

Mr. BATSANOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) (translated from Russian): Thank you, Sir. You have given me the floor in my capacity as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. However, I must at the outset ask for your forgiveness and say a few words in my national capacity. I would like to say that as the representative of the Soviet Union and as someone who has worked in, I think, all the diplomatic posts within the Soviet delegation to this Conference, I am extremely grieved at the unwelcome and untimely death of Ambassador Alfonso Garcia Robles. I had the good fortune to know him for quite a long period of time, first of all as one of the junior officials in the Soviet delegation, and then I was fortunate enough to be his colleague here in the Conference, and on every occasion I could not help admiring the way he operated, his tenacity and also his extraordinary capacity to find ways out of situations which allowed the positions of the parties involved in the discussion - very often this included the Mexican side - to be duly respected. So I would like to endorse what was said by my coordinator, Ambassador Toth, and his request for our profound condolences to be conveyed to the Mexican people, and Government, and the relatives of the deceased, and truly I am deeply moved by this event.

Now, if I may, I will move on to introducing the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, which is contained in document CD/1108. It was adopted by our Committee on 27 August. As in previous years, the report consists of three parts: the technical part, appendix I, containing the text of the draft convention, and appendix II, containing material for further work. It can be said without exaggeration that the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons in 1991 has taken on a completely new character. The stage has been passed where many doubted it was possible to rapidly conclude the negotiations on the convention banning chemical weapons. The negotiations in the Ad Hoc Committee have now entered a new, more advanced stage. This is reflected, inter alia, in the change in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons.

On 20 June, further to its decision of 14 February to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, the Conference on Disarmament added to the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee. The scope of the future convention was expanded to include a fundamental obligation, that of prohibiting the use of chemical weapons. Furthermore, the Committee was instructed to intensify the negotiations "with a view to striving to achieve a final agreement on the convention by 1992". In pursuance of this decision the Ad Hoc Committee has already conducted an additional session of limited duration from 8 to 19 July 1991, and I must add that this was a rather productive session. In this context, I would like to draw the attention of delegates to the Ad Hoc Committee's recommendation that it should continue work on the draft convention until the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons by the 1992 session of the Conference on Disarmament, except for three periods: 9 to 27 September; 14 October to 15 November; and 23 December to 3 January 1992. However, even during those periods, in the view of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Chairman and the members of the bureau should hold active private consultations to prepare the ground for the work of the Committee. There will also be a meeting of experts on technical aspects of the destruction of chemical weapons from 7 to 11 October.

(Mr. Batsanov, USSR)

I would now like to dwell briefly on the principal results of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee over the past year. Even a cursory glance at the text of the draft convention introduced today will indicate the substantial body of new material which has been included in the draft convention as a result of the work of the Ad Hoc Committee this year. Once again we have a very large document, 225 pages long, at least in the Russian version, but that is not the point; the point is that we have quite a few really new provisions in the draft convention, new important provisions. I am referring first and foremost to the provisions forming the core of the future convention on the prevention of chemical weapons, on which we were unable to arrive at a solution over a long period. I am talking about the issues included in the "security basket". On the basis of the results of work this year, article I of the draft convention now contains an obligation for States parties "never under any circumstances to use chemical weapons". The issue of the mandatory 10-year period for the destruction of chemical weapons and production facilities has also been finally resolved. Article X on assistance and protection against chemical weapons and article XIII on "Relation to other international agreements" have also been included in the draft. And I would particularly like to stress that in these articles there are no unagreed provisions at all. Also included in the draft convention are article XI on economic and technological development, article XII on measures to redress a situation and to ensure compliance, including sanctions, and article XVI on settlement of disputes. Efforts to finalize the text of these three articles will of course be continued.

The Ad Hoc Committee had at the centre of its attention issues related to machinery for verifying compliance with the provisions of the convention. This relates to both verification under article VI, "Activities not prohibited under the Convention", as well as challenge inspections, that is to say, inspections under article IX. The results of the work done on article VI are reflected in the document submitted today. Although there are certain conceptual differences of view concerning the scope of verification in civil commerical industry, the work that has been done makes it possible to state that there are realistic prospects for a compromise solution. Many interesting proposals and suggestions have been put forward on the problem of solving the issue of challenge inspections. Intensive consultations on this subject have been conducted by the Ad Hoc Committee Chairman. Here again we should note a desire on the part of all participants in the negotiations to work seriously in order to find a mutually acceptable compromise. After intensive consultations during our work this year it has also been possible to make distinct progress on the important issue of the use of terms "jurisdiction and control" in the text of the convention. New provisions in this regard are reflected in articles I, III, IV, V and VI. In addition, extensive work has been done in all the groups to "clean up" a large number of articles in the draft convention.

At the end of the summer session, or rather the third part of the session of the Conference on Disarmament, as it is now known, the Ad Hoc Committee began discussions on the issue of the composition of and decision-making procedure in the executive council to be established under the convention. There is no need to stress how important the settlement of this issue is. Of

(Mr. Batsanov, USSR)

course, serious work will be needed here, and we will need to do our utmost to reduce our differences on this subject. It would not seem to be a wise idea to postpone a final decision on the whole complex of problems concerning the executive council until the very end of work on the draft convention. Important issues which we still have to deal with in the near future are questions relating to the financing of the future organization and its structure. The recent specific proposals which have been put forward on this subject are of interest and deserve in-depth study.

The considerable progress achieved on the multilateral convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction was made possible thanks to the efforts made by all participants in the negotiations, including the 37 States that are not members of the Conference on Disarmament, and their desire to seek mutually acceptable compromise solutions, their readiness to devote maximum attention, regardless of the time required, to moving work on the Convention forward as fast as possible. I can safely state that the groundwork for the present progress was largely laid by my predecessors as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, and by all the many years of painstaking work on the draft convention. Of course, we still have much to do in order to complete the work on the convention next year.

In submitting the report I must express my warmest thanks to the chairmen of the three working groups, Mr. Mashhadi from Iran, Mr. Gizowsky from Poland and Mr. Perugini from Italy. I was also helped in my work by the friends of the Chair, Ambassadors Loeis and Brotodiningrat from Indonesia, Mr. Meerburg, the Netherlands and Mr. Canonne, France. The members of the bureau of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons did all they could to help move ahead with work on the draft convention. Enormous work was also done by Mrs. Rautio, Finland, in the Group on Analytical Database and Laboratories. We may rightly consider this work as practical preparation for the operation of the future organization. On behalf of the participants in the negotiations on the prohibition of chemical weapons I would also like to take this opportunity to extend our gratitude to the Government of the Netherlands for organizing the visit to The Hague, where the Government of the Netherlands proposes to locate the headquarters of the future organization under the convention. Allow me also to thank the Secretary of the Ad Hoc Committee, Mr. Bensmail, his deputy, Ms. Hoppe, and their assistants, Ms. Darby and Ms. Roux, and to note their great professionalism and invaluable assistance in our work. I would also like to extend our appreciation to the interpreters and translators as well as all the technical personnel who contributed to the effectiveness and proper organization of our work.

As I have already said, in approving its report to the Conference on Disarmament, our Ad Hoc Committee is not in any way preparing to wind down its work. Quite the contrary - this year the "inter-sessional period" promises to be especially busy. So please do not be surprised at my next statement: if the Conference agrees with the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, the Committee's next meeting will be held on [illegible]

(Mr. Batsanov, USSR)

And the final point: in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee there is no reference to anybody being recommended for the post of Chairman for the next yearly cycle of the Conference on Disarmament. In fact, I don't know, maybe a shorter term of office than mine awaits the future Chairman. At all events, there is no such recommendation, and that is because when we adopted the report last week in the Ad Hoc Committee, we did not yet have a candidate we could include in the report. However, I am now delighted to inform you and officially report that we have consensus to the effect that Dr. Adolf Ritter von Wagner, Ambassador and representative of Germany to the Conference on Disarmament, is recommended as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons for the next yearly cycle of the Conference on Disarmament. I am convinced, and I am expressing the shared view of all the participants in the CW negotiations, that this is a fine choice. We know the distinguished Ambassador von Wagner as an experienced CW negotiator. This year he had a heavy burden on his shoulders as the Western Group's coordinator on chemical weapons, and I think we can be certain that he will be a fine Chairman for next year. Therefore, on my own behalf, and on behalf of the other members of the Ad Hoc Committee, I would like to congratulate Ambassador von Wagner, so to speak, on his forthcoming designation as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, in January, of course. On the basis of my own experience, I could at the same time express some commiseration with him. But that is what his destiny is now going to be. Yet again I congratulate him and express the hope that the Conference on Disarmament will endorse our report, the report of our Ad Hoc Committee.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of the Soviet Union for his statement. I have no other speakers on my list. I suggest that we move on to adopt decisions on those ad hoc committee reports that have yet to be approved. We will do so following the order of their introduction in plenary. We will begin with the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, contained in document CD/1106. If there are no objections, I will take it that the Conference adopts the report.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): We move on to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, which appears in document CD/1105. As there are no objections, we will adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): We are now to adopt document CD/1108, containing the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. If there are no objections, we will adopt it.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I now give the floor to the

Mr. von WAGNER (Germany): I take the floor on behalf of the Western Group as their CW Coordinator to express our gratitude through you, Mr. President, to the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, Ambassador Serguei Batsanov. He has guided the Ad Hoc Committee with great wisdom, sensitivity and patience, as witnessed by the report we have just adopted.

With the exception of the "challenge" part of article IX, for the first time in CW negotiating history, all the elements of a complete draft convention are on the table in the Ad Hoc Committee. This has become possible due to important progress achieved during the past 24 negotiation weeks plus two inter-sessional weeks. I shall abstain from repeating the different points which I had originally listed in my manuscript since Ambassador Batsanov has just alluded to them so eloquently. Remaining problems, however, must be mentioned and should not be underestimated. Although there seems to be general support for a graduated "managed access" approach, the discussion on challenge inspections so far hints at major negotiation difficulties concerning the role of the executive council as well as other issues. On the question of verification of chemical industry we need to find a cost-effective and practicable system, balancing breadth of coverage with protection of legitimate industrial activity. Provisions concerning trade with CW-related chemicals for peaceful purposes will not be an easy problem to solve. Against that, the composition and the functions of the executive council seem to be questions which - once political decisions are taken - could be solved rather quickly. Destruction of old and abandoned chemical weapons urgently needs in-depth consideration. Lastly, on the issue of universal adherence to the chemical weapons convention, important proposals are still on the agenda.

All these problems are solvable. The groundwork has been laid. The details - in which, according to a well-known proverb, the devil sits - can be worked out. What the Conference and the Ad Hoc Committee need is the determination of delegations to do so. Governments and delegations must be aware of the enormous gain in security which could be registered for all States through a well-verified and reliable chemical weapons convention. If delegations have forgotten the risk which otherwise would exist, they should remember the war between Iraq and Iran as well as the recent Gulf war - wars which are almost unimaginable in some other regions of the world.

Each international legal instrument involves the acceptance of certain obligations and restrictions. In the case of the chemical weapons convention the price of such acceptance is made worthwhile not only by security gains but also by the creation of a climate of confidence in which international cooperation and peaceful trade in chemicals can prosper. Let's be realistic: the overall balance is extremely positive. Let's draw the right conclusions from this assessment and establish the CW convention by May 1992.

(Mr. von Wagner, Germany)

you mentioned me, whether it would be appropriate from a protocol point of view to mention what I wanted to say, and I came to the conclusion that probably it was not appropriate, but since you, in your wisdom and you, Mr. Chairman, in yours, have mentioned me, I will just tell you that I am deeply moved and that I am very grateful mainly to the Western Group delegations who have given me the honour of being their candidate for the post of Ad Hoc Committee Chairman, and to you who have endorsed this nomination.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Germany for his statement. We have thus completed consideration of the reports of the subsidiary bodies. It now falls to us to adopt the annual report to the United Nations General Assembly contained in documents CD/WP.409, 409/Corr.1, and 411 and the Rev.1 versions of documents CD/WP.412 to 415, with the changes introduced orally in the informal meeting. The secretariat will fill in the blank spaces and dotted lines in the texts containing the draft report. As usual the final text of the annual report will incorporate the reports of the five ad hoc committees that were established in 1991. I now put before the Conference for adoption the draft annual report contained in the documents I have just mentioned. Does any delegation wish to take the floor before we adopt the report? The representative of Mongolia has the floor.

Mr. GONGOR (Mongolia) (translated from Russian): The Mongolian delegation regrets the footnote to paragraph 12 of the draft report (document CD/WP.409 and Corr.1), which is not in keeping with the decision adopted earlier by the Conference on the expansion of the membership of the Conference whilst maintaining a proper balance. The Mongolian delegation considers that such a footnote can only be made on questions of the substance of the work of the Conference this year, and not in reference to a decision adopted earlier.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Mongolia for his statement, which we have duly noted. If there are no objections, I shall take it that the Conference adopts its annual report to the United Nations General Assembly.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Does any delegation wish to take the floor now? I suggest that we move on to another matter. Under rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the Conference, we are required to set the actual dates for the three parts of the 1992 session. I propose the following dates: Tuesday 21 January to Friday 27 March for the first part; Monday 11 May to Friday 26 June for the second part; and Monday 20 July to Thursday 3 September for the third part. Of course, it is understood that these dates do not prejudge any decision that the Conference may adopt, should it be necessary, on additional work during the breaks between the first and second

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I will now make my closing statement as President of the Conference.

We have come to the conclusion of the 1991 session of the Conference on Disarmament. I may say that this year's work in this forum has been stimulated by the new international climate of dialogue, openness and cooperation prevailing among nations, major agreements in the field of arms control and other initiatives aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime. At the start of what could be an era of new opportunities, at the beginning of history instead of the end as it has been called, the international community should encourage a renewed commitment to, and the strengthening of, the peace and security mechanisms created under the Charter of the United Nations. Thus, at present, when we speak of a new world order - when, under unprecedented circumstances, conditions exist for promoting understanding, solidarity and just international relations - there is a need for efforts to replace old approaches aiming at absolute security by structures based on common security. In this context the Disarmament Conference has a significant contribution to make. In this Conference we have noted a considerable shift towards positions that are more constructive and conciliatory. I think that what could be and I hope will be an auspicious trend should encourage future progress in achieving agreements on the various topics on our agenda.

When I began my term of office as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I highlighted the progress made in the negotiation of the chemical weapons convention. Today, Ambassador Batsanov of the Soviet Union, who is chairing the work of that Committee with great skill, submitted the report on its work, which is a clear reflection of the progress achieved. Mention should be made of the improvements in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee as well as in various relevant articles, through the inclusion of specific provisions on the prohibition of the use of chemical weapons and guarantees with respect to their total destruction, as well as the decision to include various articles in the text of the draft convention. Article X, on assistance and protection against the use of chemical weapons, is particularly important, as well as article XI on economic and technological development. The Ad Hoc Committee will continue to work during the inter-sessional period, so as to give impetus to the negotiations with a view to final agreement on the convention in 1992. I also wish to express our gratitude to the Government of the Netherlands for their invitation to visit The Hague. We are giving very serious consideration to the offer of the Government of that country to host the headquarters of the future chemical weapons organization.

This year, too, useful work has been done on the nuclear test ban, which is a topic of vital importance. We are all aware of the difficulties which existed in the past as regards re-establishing the Committee on this item. In the 1990 session the decision on its re-establishment was adopted perhaps

(The President)

positions and proposals submitted. It is to be hoped that the Committee will continue its work, taking into account the ground already covered as well as the need to channel its work towards an objective that is essential and cannot be deferred - the establishment of a complete nuclear test ban.

Another area that will require additional effort by the Conference is that relating to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The work of the Ad Hoc Committee this year has been fairly fruitful, allowing more appropriate and in-depth analysis of the aspects relating to this topic. A good number of proposals have been submitted on measures to prevent an arms race in outer space, and this should encourage the Committee to step up its efforts to achieve concrete agreements.

It is clear that efforts aimed at improving the functioning of the work of this Conference have not yet been exhausted. In consultations various aspects relating to this topic were taken up, in what has been a very useful exercise which should be continued. More time and reflection will also be required to give due consideration to the topic of the expansion of the membership of the Conference - a topic which is of course of incontestable importance.

Many constructive statements have been made in plenary meetings during this year, some of them from distinguished figures. Another factor that deserves mention is the active participation in this Conference by observer countries, which have made a positive contribution to our work. As we round off the work of this session, we can see that the role that this forum is destined to play is more pertinent than ever. Consequently, we should endeavour to live up to the challenges and demands posed by the present times, in keeping with the interest and the trust which the international community has placed in this Conference, whose credibility needs to be enhanced. Let us make good use of the experience we have gained and the results of our work to generate the necessary political impetus that will enable us to rise to achieve the concrete and higher objectives that justified the establishment of this multilateral negotiating body.

Today we have adopted the report of the Conference on Disarmament for 1991, which I will present to the forty-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. This report is a faithful reflection of intensive work and the spirit of cooperation shown. I wish to thank sincerely all those who have participated in this task, and I would urge them to continue in this same constructive spirit in the future. Once again, I wish to thank my predecessors for the efficient manner in which they presided over the work of the Conference throughout the course of this year, and also the chairmen of the various committees that were set up for their talents and great dedication in carrying out their responsibilities. I wish to express my deep gratitude to all the secretariat and conference services staff, particularly Ambassador Komatina, the Secretary-General, and

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and diligent efforts of the secretariat, it would have been impossible for the Conference to discharge its tasks fully. We also wish to thank the team of interpreters and translators, who have given us invaluable support in our work.

I have now concluded my closing statement, and I wish to report to you that I have no other business to take up before the closure of the work of the Conference. It remains to remind you that, in keeping with the decision adopted today by the Conference with respect to the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, that subsidiary body will continue its work during the inter-sessional period in keeping with the recommendation in paragraph 16, subparagraphs (c) and (d) of the above-mentioned report.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Tuesday 21 January 1992 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.